



UNITED STATES PATENT AND TRADEMARK OFFICE

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE
United States Patent and Trademark Office
Address: COMMISSIONER FOR PATENTS
P.O. Box 1450
Alexandria, Virginia 22313-1450
www.uspto.gov

APPLICATION NO.	FILING DATE	FIRST NAMED INVENTOR	ATTORNEY DOCKET NO.	CONFIRMATION NO.
09/437,111	10/16/2001	AKITSUGA NINJOUJI	SUD-002-USA-	7535

7590 08/01/2003

TOWNSEND & BANTA
601 Pennsylvania Avenue, N. W.
Suite 900 South Building
Washington, DC 20004

EXAMINER

SHERMER, CURTIS EDWARD

ART UNIT

PAPER NUMBER

1761

DATE MAILED: 08/01/2003

11

Please find below and/or attached an Office communication concerning this application or proceeding.

Office Action Summary	Application No.	Applicant(s)
	09/437,111	NINJOUJI ET AL. <i>je</i>
Examiner	Art Unit	
Curtis E. Sherrer	1761	

-- The MAILING DATE of this communication appears on the cover sheet with the correspondence address --
Period for Reply

A SHORTENED STATUTORY PERIOD FOR REPLY IS SET TO EXPIRE 3 MONTH(S) FROM THE MAILING DATE OF THIS COMMUNICATION.

- Extensions of time may be available under the provisions of 37 CFR 1.136(a). In no event, however, may a reply be timely filed after SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- If the period for reply specified above is less than thirty (30) days, a reply within the statutory minimum of thirty (30) days will be considered timely.
- If NO period for reply is specified above, the maximum statutory period will apply and will expire SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- Failure to reply within the set or extended period for reply will, by statute, cause the application to become ABANDONED (35 U.S.C. § 133).
- Any reply received by the Office later than three months after the mailing date of this communication, even if timely filed, may reduce any earned patent term adjustment. See 37 CFR 1.704(b).

Status

1) Responsive to communication(s) filed on 06/04/03.

2a) This action is **FINAL**. 2b) This action is non-final.

3) Since this application is in condition for allowance except for formal matters, prosecution as to the merits is closed in accordance with the practice under *Ex parte Quayle*, 1935 C.D. 11, 453 O.G. 213.

4) Claim(s) 1-7 is/are pending in the application.

 4a) Of the above claim(s) 6-7 is/are withdrawn from consideration.

5) Claim(s) _____ is/are allowed.

6) Claim(s) 1-5 is/are rejected.

7) Claim(s) _____ is/are objected to.

8) Claim(s) _____ are subject to restriction and/or election requirement.

Application Papers

9) The specification is objected to by the Examiner.

10) The drawing(s) filed on _____ is/are: a) accepted or b) objected to by the Examiner.
 Applicant may not request that any objection to the drawing(s) be held in abeyance. See 37 CFR 1.85(a).

11) The proposed drawing correction filed on _____ is: a) approved b) disapproved by the Examiner.
 If approved, corrected drawings are required in reply to this Office action.

12) The oath or declaration is objected to by the Examiner.

Priority under 35 U.S.C. §§ 119 and 120

13) Acknowledgment is made of a claim for foreign priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119(a)-(d) or (f).
 a) All b) Some * c) None of:
 1. Certified copies of the priority documents have been received.
 2. Certified copies of the priority documents have been received in Application No. _____.
 3. Copies of the certified copies of the priority documents have been received in this National Stage application from the International Bureau (PCT Rule 17.2(a)).
 * See the attached detailed Office action for a list of the certified copies not received.

14) Acknowledgment is made of a claim for domestic priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119(e) (to a provisional application).
 a) The translation of the foreign language provisional application has been received.

15) Acknowledgment is made of a claim for domestic priority under 35 U.S.C. §§ 120 and/or 121.

Attachment(s)

1) Notice of References Cited (PTO-892) 4) Interview Summary (PTO-413) Paper No(s). _____.
2) Notice of Draftsperson's Patent Drawing Review (PTO-948) 5) Notice of Informal Patent Application (PTO-152)
3) Information Disclosure Statement(s) (PTO-1449) Paper No(s) _____. 6) Other:

DETAILED ACTION

Priority

Receipt is acknowledged of papers submitted under 35 U.S.C. 119(a)-(d), which papers have been placed of record in the file.

Acknowledgment is made of applicant's claim for priority under 35 U.S.C. 119(a)-(d) based upon an application filed in Japan on 12/29/98. A claim for priority under 35 U.S.C. 119(a)-(d) cannot be based on said application, since the United States application was filed more than twelve months thereafter. It is noted that applicant's filing date is October, 16, 2001.

Election/Restrictions

Applicant's election of claims 1-5 in Paper No. 10 is acknowledged. Because applicant did not distinctly and specifically point out the supposed errors in the restriction requirement, the election has been treated as an election without traverse (MPEP § 818.03(a)).

Claims 6 and 7 are withdrawn from further consideration pursuant to 37 CFR 1.142(b) as being drawn to a nonelected invention, there being no allowable generic or linking claim. Election was made **without** traverse in Paper No. 10.

Claim Rejections - 35 USC § 112

The following is a quotation of the second paragraph of 35 U.S.C. 112:

The specification shall conclude with one or more claims particularly pointing out and distinctly claiming the subject matter which the applicant regards as his invention.

Claims 1-5 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 112, second paragraph, as being indefinite for failing to particularly point out and distinctly claim the subject matter which applicant regards as the invention.

Claim 1 is indefinite because the scope of the phrase “low alcoholic beverage sake” is unknown.

Claim 1 is indefinite because there is no antecedent basis for the phrases “the clear liquid,” “the other part” and “the above unrefined sake.”

Claim 4 is indefinite because the scope of the term “multiple acids” is not clear.

Claims 3 and 4 are indefinite because the scope of the phrases “Japanese sake scaling” and “acidity 3 – 4” is unknown. Said claims are indefinite because the scale on which the alcohol concentration is based is unknown, i.e., vol./vol., etc.

Claim 4 is indefinite because there is no antecedent basis for the phrases “the closed system” or “the sealed tank.” Further, because it is unclear what applicants are referring to by using these phrases, the claim is undecipherable and therefore cannot be examined with respect to the prior art.

Claim Rejections - 35 USC § 102

The following is a quotation of the appropriate paragraphs of 35 U.S.C. 102 that form the basis for the rejections under this section made in this Office action:

A person shall be entitled to a patent unless –

(b) the invention was patented or described in a printed publication in this or a foreign country or in public use or on sale in this country, more than one year prior to the date of application for patent in the United States.

Claims 1-3 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 102(b) as being anticipated by *Ninchiyouji et al.* (Jap. Pat. No. 410295356) ("Ninchiyouji").

Ninchiyouji teaches the production of low alcohol sparkling sake that is produced by fermenting steamed rice with a rice koji in the presence of a polyacid. After fermentation the liquid is filtered with a coarse mesh and the clear and turbid liquids are mixed and placed in a bottle where by gas pressure increases due to fermentation to a pressure of 2-5 kg/cm². (See Abstract. From scanning the patent document itself, it can be seen from the numbers found therein, that the limitations of claim 4 are met.

It is notoriously well known that the koji breaks down the rice starch to produce acids, such as lactic acid. Because applicant's specification does not teach adding multiple acids, it is assumed for the purposes of this action, that applicant is referring to the acids inherently present in the koji. (Col. 3, lines 31-47).

Conclusion

The prior art made of record and not relied upon is considered pertinent to applicant's disclosure. *Shimamura et al.* (U.S. Pat. No. 6,265,000) teaches the production of carbonated, alcoholic beverages made from koji, rice malt and yeast.

Any inquiry concerning this communication or earlier communications from the examiner should be directed to Curtis E. Sherrer whose telephone number is 703-308-3847. The examiner can normally be reached on Tuesday-Friday, 8AM-6:30PM.

If attempts to reach the examiner by telephone are unsuccessful, the examiner's supervisor, Milton Cano can be reached on 703-308-3959. The fax phone numbers for the

Art Unit: 1761

organization where this application or proceeding is assigned are 703-305-3602 for regular communications and 703-305-3602 for After Final communications.

Any inquiry of a general nature or relating to the status of this application or proceeding should be directed to the receptionist whose telephone number is 703-308-0661.



Curtis E. Sherrer
Primary Examiner
July 29, 2003